DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 402 214 SO 025 713

AUTHOR Outis, Janet
TITLE Improving Motivation of Sixth Grade Music Students through Curriculum Interventions and Teaching Practices.
PUB DATE May 94
NOTE 55p.; Masters Research Project, Saint Xavier University Illinois.
PUB TYPE Dissertations/Theses - Masters Theses (042) -- Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Attitude Measures; *Change Strategies; *Educational Improvement; *Grade 6; Integrated Activities; Intermediate Grades; Middle Schools; *Music Education; Student Attitudes; *Student Motivation; Teacher Behavior
IDENTIFIERS Multiple Intelligences

ABSTRACT

This report describes a program for improving the motivation of sixth grade students in the music class and for increasing their understanding of the relevancy of music in their total curriculum. The students are part of a low to middle class suburban community located in northeastern Illinois. The problem was noted originally by the music teacher who found that, as students progressed to the intermediate grades, they began to question the importance of music and what value it had in their future lives. The teacher also noted that students showed a lack of effort and achievement in the classroom music activities. Teacher observation was confirmed by the administration of a student attitude survey. Analysis of the probable cause data revealed that students did not feel that music was an important subject and lacked confidence in their musical skills and abilities. Students did not understand the relationship of music to other areas of the curriculum and the importance of music in their lives. Probable cause data from the literature indicated that individuals today are more passive in their music participation than in the past. Solution strategies suggested by knowledgeable others, combined with an analysis of the problem setting, resulted in the selection of three intervention plans: implementation of an integrated unit of study; an emphasis on activities using the various intelligences as noted by Howard Gardner; and plans to raise the self-esteem of the students through changes in teacher behavior. The solution strategy implemented resulted in positive outcomes. Students showed increased effort and achievement in the music class, gained a better understanding of the relevancy of music in the curriculum, and showed increased self-esteem. (JO)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

50

ED 402 214

IMPROVING MOTIVATION OF SIXTH GRADE MUSIC STUDENTS THROUGH CURRICULUM INTERVENTIONS AND TEACHING PRACTICES

by

*Janet Outis

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Janet Outis

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master's of Arts in Education

SO 025 713

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Saint Xavier University - IRI
Field-Based Master's Program

Action Research Final Report
Site: Wheeling, IL
Submitted: May, 1994

*Teacher
Frost Elementary
Mt. Prospect, IL

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

This Action Research was approved by

Priscilla Hartwig Ed.D., **SXU Facilitator**

Terry Stirling, Ph.D., **IRI/Skylight Facilitator**

Dean, School of Education

Table of Contents

		Page
Abstract		iii
Chapter		
I	Statement of Problem and Description of Context	1
	Problem Statement	1
	Description of Immediate Problem Setting	1
	Regional and National Context of the Problem	4
II	Problem Evidence and Probable Cause	7
	Problem Background	7
	Problem Evidence and Probable Cause	8
III	The Solution Strategy	15
	Review of the Literature	15
	Project Outcomes	21
IV	Action Plan for Implementing the Solution Strategy	23
	Description of Problem Resolution	23
	Methods of Assessment	26
V	Evaluation of Results and Processes	27
	Implementation History	27
	Presentation and Analysis of Project Results	32
	Reflections and Conclusions	35
VI	Decisions of the Future	37
	The Solution Strategy	37
	Additional Applications	39
	Dissemination of Data and Recommendations	40

References Cited 42

Appendices 44

Appendix A Music Interest Survey 44

Appendix B Student Questionnaire 45

Appendix C Music Attitude Survey 46

Appendix D Course Outline of Integrated Unit 47

Abstract

AUTHOR: Janet Outis SITE: Wheeling
DATE: May 1994

TITLE: Improving Motivation of Sixth Grade Music Students Through Curriculum Interventions and Teaching Practices

ABSTRACT: This report describes a program for improving the motivation of sixth grade students in the music class and for increasing their understanding of the relevancy of music in their total curriculum. The students are part of a low to middle class suburban community located in northeastern Illinois. The problem was originally noted by the music teacher who found that, as students progressed to the intermediate grades, they began to question the importance of music and what value it has in their future lives. The teacher also noted that students showed a lack of effort and achievement in the classroom music activities. Teacher observation was confirmed by the administration of a student attitude survey.

Analysis of the probable cause data revealed that students did not feel that music is an important subject and lacked confidence in their musical skills and abilities. Students did not understand the relationship of music to other areas of the curriculum and the importance of music in their lives. Probable cause data from the literature indicated that Americans today are more passive in their music participation than in the past.

Solution strategies suggested by knowledgeable others, combined with an analysis of the problem setting, resulted in the selection of three intervention plans: implementation of an integrated unit of study; an emphasis on activities using the various intelligences as noted by Howard Gardner; and plans to raise the self-esteem of the students through changes in teacher behavior.

The solution strategy implemented resulted in positive outcomes. Students showed increased effort and achievement in the music class, gained a better understanding of the relevancy of music in the curriculum, and showed increased self-esteem.

Chapter 1

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM AND DESCRIPTION OF CONTEXT

Problem Statement

Sixth grade students are not highly motivated to learn in music class and do not consider music an important part of their curriculum as evidenced by surveys indicating negative attitudes toward the subject matter, lack of participation, and low achievement on tests.

Description of Immediate Problem Setting

This study takes place in a suburban elementary school servicing 618 kindergarten through sixth grade students. There are nine elementary schools in the district consisting of kindergarten through sixth grade. There are two junior high schools which feed into three high schools in the area. The student population at this school is 60.4 percent White, 4.2 percent Black, 26 percent Hispanic, 8.9 percent Asian/Pacific Islander, and 0.2 percent Native American. In the last two decades the percentage of minority students in the state of Illinois has steadily increased.

The family socio-economic status covers a broad spectrum with 24.3 percent of the children coming from low-income environments, and 22 percent of the children representing limited English-proficient situations. This school's total enrollment includes the district-wide second

and third grade bilingual students. These students are mainstreamed into regular classrooms for math, science, and social studies as their capabilities increase and meet the demands of the regular classroom. The bilingual students are immediately mainstreamed into music and physical education classes at the beginning of the school year by having one half of the bilingual class and one half of the regular class form two separate sections to go to music and physical education.

Twenty-two percent of the students in this school come from single-parent homes. The attendance rate is 95.3 percent and the mobility rate is 14.6 percent. There are no listed truants. This school's population has 163 children receiving free lunches and 64 getting reduced-priced lunches. Twelve and a half percent of this school's population is from single-family homes. The remaining student population of 88 percent is drawn from multiple-family dwellings which include some low-income housing.

The staff of the school is quite large, numbering 49 in total. Included are: one principal, 28 grade level teachers, one Chapter I reading teacher, two learning disability/behavior disorder teachers, one full-time and one part-time physical education teacher, one full and one part-time music teacher, one art teacher, one counselor, one part-time orchestra teacher, one library assistant, one media specialist, one part-time nurse, one full-time nurse's assistant,

one speech and language therapist, and two classroom teaching assistants. Additional personnel include one school psychologist, one secretary, and three janitors. The staff population represents 93 percent White and seven percent Hispanic.

The full-time music and physical education teachers teach 24 sections of grades one through six. Each class meets twice a week for 30 minutes. There is a separate classroom available to use for music classes.

Description of the Surrounding Community

The elementary school is a part of a Community Consolidated School District located in a northwestern suburb of Chicago in Cook County. The total district student enrollment is 6,356. This school's population is comprised of students from sections of three northwest suburbs with 17 percent coming from Mt. Prospect, seven percent from Wheeling, and 76 percent from Prospect Heights. Student enrollment for the 1986/1987 school year was 5,513 compared to 6,356 students enrolled this year, showing an increase of 15.3 percent. The socio-economic status of the district and this school is low to middle income. This school ranked 59th of 61 schools of the surrounding Cook County area in having the most students from low-income families.

The school district operated 17 schools and one administrative center until three schools were closed in 1980 due to declining enrollments. Three more schools were closed in

the next two years. Today the district operates 11 school buildings and one administrative center that are currently undergoing significant changes. These changes include major renovation of the administration center as well as major additions to several of the existing buildings. These changes are taking place to accommodate a rise in student population and to create space for new innovative programs that the district offers.

Regional and National Context of the Problem

In recent months much has been written and discussed about a directive for school reform, America 2000. Much attention has been given to what are considered the five core subjects: English, math, science, history, and geography. However, can a plan which neglects the mention of the arts as a subject be a truly rich educational agenda for the children of our nation?

> Music and the arts are not extras but basic. They are just as intrinsic an element of the term "educated" as are mathematics, language, history, and science. They are inherent to what it means to be human because the arts are the arenas where we work out our deepest longings and articulate our highest hopes. To deprive a child of the knowledge and tools to explore the domain of the arts is to subject him or her to a kind of spiritual starvation; a child with no key to the door grows up with a malnourished soul (Glenn, 1992, p. 30).

Eisner (1992, p. 594-595) writes about four contributions that the arts can make to human development. First, Eisner states, "Not all problems have a single, correct answer." Unlike some basic skills requiring concrete an-

swers, the arts teach us to imagine, to see different viewpoints, and to give personal interpretations. Second, Eisner states, "The form of a thing is part of its content." If something is classified and limited to only one category, its meaning is limited. In the arts, forms can be perceived in numerous contents.

Next, Eisner (1992, p.595) states that, "Having fixed objectives and pursuing clear-cut methods for achieving them are not always the most rational ways of dealing with the world." Despite the fact that having clear-cut goals and ways to achieve them give direction to our lives, many times we must be flexible to meet changes that occur and opportunities which arise in our everyday life and work situations. Creating a work of art can teach us to follow a path of exploration and discovery.

As the fourth point, Eisner discusses the contribution of the arts to expression and discovery. More than any other subject, arts activities can help the students develop their ability to feel and imagine, making their lives much richer and more enjoyable.

Psychologist Howard Gardner's theory of intelligences, published in 1983, gives evidence that the arts represent forms of intelligence. Gardner identified seven intelligences: linguistic, logical-mathematical, musical, spatial, kinesthetic, and two forms of personal intelligence--interpersonal (understanding other people) and interpersonal

(understanding yourself). "Gardner's work provides scientific evidence that the arts represent forms of intelligence (Fowler, 1990, p. 25).

Gardner's theory and it's impact on curriculum development was the subject of discussion at a Conference of Artistic Intelligences, held in April 1989 at the University of South Carolina. Mary Futrell, president of the National Education Association at the time, as cited by Fowler (1990, p. 26) stated: "We must become a people who give as much thought to standards as to the stock market, as much thought to morality as to technology, as much thought to ethics as to economics, as much thought to artistic beauty as to economic utility."

It is hoped that in our rush to emphasize the basics of the curriculum and to reform our schools, the arts will not be forgotten, but placed in high priority. Music teachers should make an effort to help students and parents realize that the arts are an important part of a child's education and development. In their lessons teachers can show many relationships to various subject areas to make the study of music more meaningful and relevant. Classroom teachers can use music as a way to expand on lessons taught in reading and social studies. At curriculum nights and open houses teachers can explain to parents how music can play a major part in the total intellectual and creative development of their children.

Chapter 2

PROBLEM EVIDENCE AND PROBABLE CAUSE

Problem Background

As pointed out in Chapter 1, there is a lack of motivation and effort by the sixth graders in general music class. Lack of motivation refers to the feeling that students have that music is not an important part of their curriculum, and therefore effort on their part is not really essential. "Motivation is that forceful ingredient that causes out students to exhibit a particular behavior. It includes activities that integrate personal needs and goals with a group to attain mutual goals" (Powell, 1984, p. 31).

Motivation of sixth grade students in music class seems to be a universal problem for music teachers. As the prominent music educator and composer of youth musicals, Joyce Eilers (Karnes music workshop, August 1991) stated, "I have taught music in schools from kindergarten through high school level, and sixth grade is by far, the most difficult age to interest." Other music teachers in this teacher researcher's school district have reported a similar feeling in discussions in music meetings. Many of the songs in the basic music textbook used by the students lack appeal because students feel they are "baby songs." Classical music

of the past centuries is considered "boring" because it is not a part of the students' present lives. Boys sometimes start to feel self-conscious about singing and expressing emotion because they feel it's not a masculine thing to do. Students start to question why they have to have music and how they will ever use it.

Many of the district music teachers have addressed the issues discussed above and have introduced teacher-made units dealing with modern popular music. The teachers have discussed with the students ways music can add pleasure to the students' lives and offer career possibilities. However, much still needs to be done to make the curriculum more interesting to the students.

Problem Evidence and Probable Cause

In collecting base-line evidence of the problem, the music effort grades that the students received at the end of fifth grade were analyzed. Eighteen percent of the students received a grade indicating a need to show improvement in effort; thirty-eight percent showed good effort; and forty-four percent showed excellent effort. Although there were many students who showed good or excellent effort, this teacher researcher believes that all students should be able to achieve a good or excellent rating in effort.

To determine more base-line and probable cause data concerning the problem, a music interest survey (see appendix A) and a student questionnaire (see appendix B) were

given to the sixth grade students at the beginning of the 1993-94 school year. Out of a total of 54 responses, 37 percent of the students indicated that they seldom enjoyed music class. Thirty-five percent of the students felt that music was an important subject, but only 24 percent indicated that they felt their parents thought music was an important subject. Although 50 percent of the students do participate in some music activities outside of class, only 35 percent of the students indicated that their families actively participate in any kind of musical activities at home. The following figure #1 illustrates the findings of the survey and questionnaire.

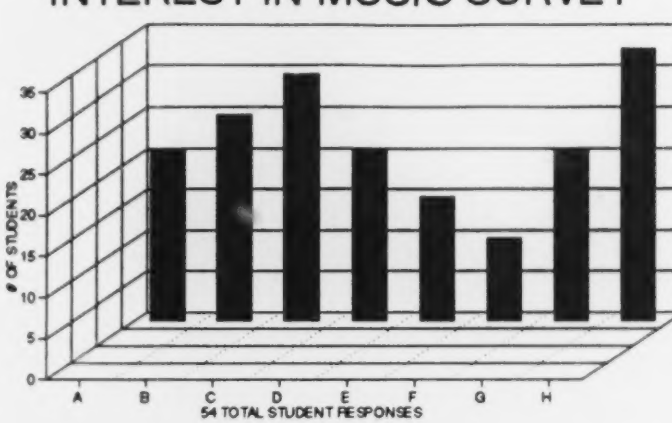


figure #1

A # of students who seldom enjoy music class

B # of students who consider themselves good participants in music class

C # of students who participate in music activities outside of class

D # of students who feel that music is an important subject

E # of students who feel that their parents think music is an important subject

F # of students whose families often attend musical shows or concerts

G # of students whose families actively participate in music activities at home

H # of students who think they sing well

Probable cause data from the literature suggested that Americans are singing less in informal settings than they used to before technology such as radios, stereos, televisions, compact disc players, and videocassette recorders took over so much of America's leisure time. Martin Joseman, as quoted by Calta (1991, p. 10), pointed out in a New York Times article, "There are signs that informal, everyday singing is in a slump." Although our country has a strong tradition of singing from the early days of the settlers, the age of technology has made society more passive in their musical participation. In addition, sometimes people are discouraged with their own efforts to perform musically when they hear professionals on recordings.

Jack Brown, of Brown's Music in Manhattan, as noted by Calta (1991), says that the sales of sheet music have declined over the last few years because many popular songs are unsingable. Even today's Broadway musicals do not have as many singable songs as former shows such as "The Sound of Music." Many of today's popular songs contain lyrics dealing with sex, violence, and drugs which are not appropriate for young adolescents. Music teachers in schools do not wish to use this inappropriate material in their classes.

In their Handbook for Middle School Teaching, George and Lawrence (1982) point out that adolescence is a developmental stage in which students are preoccupied with a number of competing forces which produce tension in their lives and

make it difficult to concentrate on academic work. One of the strongest tensions they feel is the desire for peer acceptance, but also the desire to be recognized as someone unique. Another tension is the need to develop one's individual beliefs even though they feel a reluctance to be critical of stable beliefs that they have valued from their past family experiences. This can transfer to feelings in the music class that students wish to have "their music" rather than music imposed upon them by an adult.

Another tension that young adolescents feel is the desire to participate in the adult world, but to also retain the comfort of childhood patterns of behavior. This often results in a conflict between parents and children when parents wish to keep the children in a safe, secure environment.

The comparison of physical development with one's chronological age and/or social and intellectual maturity is also a tension for adolescents. Early adolescent-aged girls may be as physically mature as twenty-one year old women, while socially and intellectually still children. Boys may be intellectually mature, but be slow to mature physically. All of these factors result in a feeling of uncertain emotions and behaviors.

Jerome Kagin, as reported by George and Lawrence (1982, p. 80), summarizes the conflicts experienced by adolescents into four categories:

1. Uncertainty about sexual-social adequacy, achieving a capacity for intimacy.
2. Uncertainty about interpersonal power, personal achievement.
3. Uncertainty about acceptability of peers.
4. Uncertainty about autonomy of belief and action, attaining individual identity and detachment from family.

A summary of probable causes for the problem gathered from the site and from the literature included the following elements:

1. Students and parents don't feel that music is an important subject.
2. Students are preoccupied with family problems.
3. Students do not see the relevancy of music in their total curriculum and in life.
4. Students are more interested in peer groups' acceptance than in academic achievement.
5. Students expect to be "entertained" when they come to music class instead of actively participating.
6. Students lack self-confidence in their musical skills and talent.
7. Americans are singing less in social situations.

8. Technology has resulted in more listeners than performers.
9. Many current popular songs are unsingable, and the subject matter is not always appropriate for young students.
10. Students are self-conscious about expressing emotions.

Chapter 3

THE SOLUTION STRATEGY

Review of the Literature

In seeking solution strategies to address the probable causes outlined in Chapter 2, the teacher researcher consulted writings on motivation theory, characteristics of middle school students, and the integrated curriculum.

In writings on motivation theory, Hunter (1967) listed six factors under the teacher's control which directly affect student motivation levels. These include: degree of concern or tension, how much the student cares about learning; feeling tone in the learning environment, pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral feelings between the teacher and learner; interest, a feeling by the student that what he is doing is relevant to his needs; a feeling of success, the need to feel some measure of success in doing the task; knowledge of results, getting specific feedback on one's performance; and intrinsic-extrinsic knowledge of the reward or goal of the activity necessary to secure it.

In regard to the feeling tone created within the music class, Hoff (1984) wrote about the importance of enthusiasm and positive encouragement. The teacher must continually reinforce and encourage the desired behavior and achieve-

ment. This can be done verbally and in more subtle ways through facial expression and body language. Jersild, as reported by Hoff (1984, p. 26), listed the following teacher qualities liked best by the elementary students: . . . "cheerful, good-tempered, attractive, neat, fair, sympathetic, consistent, resourceful, explains well, does not scold or shout, and permits expression of opinions." In summary, students desire warmth, patience, tolerance, and teacher interest in the students.

Music teachers can enhance the development of the students' self-concept by getting to know the students outside the classroom (Hoff, 1984). Perhaps one of the music students is also a good basketball player, photographer, artist, or writer. Although music teachers have many students and getting to know them takes time, the time is well-invested. Students appreciate the genuine interest and concern shown to them by the teacher. In handling discipline problems it is very important for the teacher to show that he or she disapproves of the action, and not the person. The teacher must not be so negative that the students feel "put-down" to the extent that they do not wish to participate. Music teachers should not become so involved in the demands of musical performances that they neglect the importance of the total musical development and education of the students.

Activities in music, drama, writing, dance, and visual arts give middle school students a constructive way to express their extremely intense emotions and conflicts. "Teachers who seem most successful with transescents, students age ten to fourteen, give their students regular opportunities for expressive activities" (George and Lawrence, 1982, p. 83). These activities, combined with a gentle response by the teacher to the students' strong emotional moods, result in a positive classroom climate.

Students also need to feel successful in the music class. Tasks should not be so difficult that students feel discouraged because they are unable to achieve them. In contrast, lessons should not be so simple and routine that they become boring to the students. Through the use of lessons incorporating critical and creative thinking skills, student interest can be stimulated so that they feel challenged. Fogarty and Bellanca (1991) list three explicit creative thinking skills: brainstorming, predicting, and visualizing. They further list three critical thinking skills: attributing, classifying, and prioritizing. These thinking skills have special significance for the music class. The use of visual graphic organizers can be very helpful to the students as a focus for listening to music. Venn diagrams can be used to compare and contrast musical compositions, styles, or time periods. Webs can be used to

brainstorm ideas and list characteristics in many different kinds of music lessons.

Students can also be challenged and motivated with the use of cooperative learning activities. As pointed out in Chapter 2, sixth grade students desire peer acceptance, but also wish to be recognized as individuals. In cooperative groups, students have an opportunity to work with peers to contribute to a group product, but at the same time, they can still be recognized for the uniqueness of their particular talents or skills.

> Cooperative learning is an instructional strategy. It uses cooperative "groups" as a tool for creating a more cooperative classroom in which student achievement, self-esteem, responsibility, high-level thinking, and favorable attitudes toward school increase dramatically (Bellanca and Fogarty, 1991, p. 2).

Cooperative groups have a special advantage for use in creative lessons in the music class. Students can work together to write songs or compose accompaniments. They can also do projects related to study of composers, learning of music theory, or planning of performance.

Hunter's idea of motivation as relating to the students' interests in their lives has many implications for the idea of the integrated curriculum in schools. Music teachers are becoming aware that including music in the integrated curricula can be used as a means to make music more relevant to their students' lives and to their total school experience.

> It seems that educators are realizing the potential of making meaningful relationships among learning areas in order for students to be more able to recognize the integrated way in which knowledge is used and viewed in the world. It also seems that we are beginning to acknowledge that making such connections with young people may actually reinforce skills and understandings more effectively than teaching in isolated content. (Bunaford, 1993, p. 44).

Bunaford has listed five approaches to use to integrate music with other areas of the curricula: the fine arts teachers as a team; music and literature or music and another area; integration of knowledge in the music classroom; a curriculum web using musical thematic integration; and school-wide integration.

In the first approach, the fine arts teachers as a team, i.e., the visual art, music, and dance teachers, work together to plan units to explore relationships between structure components of form, space, line, or color. The second approach involves combining music with one other subject; e.g., literature, social studies, science, or math. Literature and social studies, especially, offer a wealth of possibilities for cultural studies.

Integration of knowledge in the music classroom means that in the course of doing creative activities in the music classroom, students can draw on knowledge of other areas such as science or literature.

The fourth approach is one which uses a musical thematic design involving many teachers at a grade level or in many grade levels. For example, the music teacher might

choose to study Beethoven and his works. The other teachers could then link literature, art, and history to this study.

The fifth approach, school-wide integration, uses a theme not necessarily musically oriented, but one in which several content areas can be represented. One example of this might be a current event or current world concern such as ecology.

Music teacher N. P. Bibbons (1993) used the idea of the integrated curriculum in music performances which she called "showcases." The music performance was not viewed as simply entertainment, but as an extension of classroom activities involving music, art, and the sciences. Planning involved all the teachers in the school, and staging was done by combining talents of students, parents, and teachers. Bibbons stated that the showcase resulted in these positive outcomes: music was integrated with the entire school program, the music teacher was seen as an integral part of the staff, staff communication was increased, and student involvement was made possible with their help in selecting appropriate music.

Integrating curricular areas can not only make the study of music more interesting and relevant to the students' lives, but can also offer a way to show administrators, classroom teachers, students, and parents the importance of having music in the curriculum. It can also help raise the students' self-esteem and develop the seven intel-

ligences noted by Howard Gardner listed in Chapter 1 of this document.

Project Outcomes:

Probable cause data gathered from the site and literature suggested a need for changes in the curricula and teacher behavior to address problems of poor attitude, lack of effort, and low achievement of sixth grade students. Solution strategies suggested the use of integrated curricula and activities stressing cooperative learning and critical and creative thinking skills to raise motivation levels and students' self esteem. Therefore, the following terminal objective was stated:

> As a result of curriculum changes and changes in teacher behavior during the period of October 1993 to February 1994, the attitude and motivation of the sixth grade music students will improve and achievement will be increased as measured by a student attitude survey and by a performance-based test.

The following process objectives were chosen to support and implement the terminal objective:

> 1. As a result of implementation of an integrated unit of study based on activities in social studies, literature, music, and art during the period of October 1993 through January 1994, the sixth grade students will show an increased level of participation and motivation to learn in music class.
>
> 2. As a result of the emphasis on using the various intelligences in the integrated unit, the self-esteem of the students will be increased by making use of their particular skills and talents.

3. As a result of implementing the integrated unit, the sixth grade students will begin to see the relevancy of music in their total curriculum and in life.

Chapter 4

ACTION PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTING THE SOLUTION STRATEGY

Description of Problem Resolution Activities

The action plan is designed to address the problem of motivating the sixth grade students by implementing an integrated unit of instruction. The unit will coincide with the sixth graders' study of Ancient Egypt which will begin in October 1993 and conclude in January 1994. The unit will combine social studies, music, literature, and art activities. During the delivery of the music section this teacher researcher will use a variety of teaching models and motivational techniques to attempt to make the class interesting and rewarding to the students. Included in these models will be cooperative grouping, direct instruction, and creative and critical thinking activities.

During the last two weeks of September the music teacher will meet with the sixth grade teachers and the art teacher to discuss and share ideas to implement the activities of the integrated unit. The music teacher will also conference with the school counselor to receive his input about how to deal with some of the students who are preoccupied with family problems. The principal will be informed

about the action plan. The following paragraphs describe the activities to be implemented in music class.

As an introduction to the unit students will learn to sing the song "King Tut." Then the first activity in the music class will be to study how music and dancing were used in the religious and recreational lives of the Ancient Egyptians. Egyptian musical instruments will be discussed and explained. In cooperative groups students will discuss how they might make simple harps, pipes, drums, cymbals, or rattles. Each group will be assigned to choose one instrument and construct it.

The students will study about the various gods worshipped by the Egyptians and how the people often wrote poetry to praise the sun god. To show a bridge between ancient times and this century, students will learn a Beatles' song "Here Comes the Sun." The students will then try writing their own songs expressing how sunshine makes them feel. They may choose to work in groups or individually. In art class the art teacher will supervise the students in making clay busts of Egyptian figures and a mummy of papier-mâché.

To further bridge the gap between the past and the present century the students will learn how the Egyptian people of the 1950's listened to nightly radio broadcasts of the stories from A Thousand and One Nights from the collection of ancient tales, also known as the Arabian Nights.

They will learn information about these stories and sing the songs from today's Disney movie version of "Aladdin."

During the course of implementation of the integrated unit, the music teacher will attempt to create a pleasant atmosphere in the classroom and teach with enthusiasm. During cooperative group activities the teacher will try to promote good interaction in the groups by reminding students to encourage each other and not put down other students. Students will be asked to think creatively by brainstorming ideas and using graphic organizers to help them achieve good results.

The teacher will try to raise the self-esteem of the students by giving them immediate positive feedback on the good work that they accomplish. The teacher will also make an effort to notice and comment on special individual skills and talents that the students possess. In dealing with inappropriate behavior, the teacher will let the students know that she disapproves of their actions, not themselves as people. The teacher will attempt to keep a sense of humor and use a gentle response in reacting to any student's negative comments about lessons being taught.

The teacher will also try to get to know the students better as individuals by talking to them informally during school parties, at lunch time, and before or after school. By getting to know more about the students as individuals, the teacher will hopefully build a deeper rapport with the students.

During the activities of the integrated unit the teacher will observe and keep anecdotal notes regarding the following points:

1. Are the students enjoying the activities?
2. Are the students trying to do their best work?
3. Are the students working well in groups?
4. Are individual students doing their share of work in group activities?
5. Are the students showing on-task, appropriate behavior?
6. Are the students taking pride in their work?
7. Are the students willing to try new things?
8. Do the students seem to be making connections between music and other subjects?

Methods of Assessment

Assessment of the intervention will include both authentic and traditional devices. Letter grades will be given on individual and group projects in creating instruments and writing songs. Assessment of the learning of songs will be performance-based. Assessment of student effort and student self-esteem will be done by teacher observation. Assessment of student attitude will be done by survey.

Chapter 5

EVALUATION OF RESULTS AND PROCESSES

Implementation History

The terminal objective of the intervention addressed the need to change the poor attitude and lack of effort of sixth grade students in the music class. An analysis of the effort grades of the students in fifth grade showed that many students needed to improve their effort in music class. An attitude survey indicated that many students did not see the importance and relevancy of music in the school curriculum. Therefore, the terminal objective stated:

> As a result of curriculum changes and changes in teacher behavior during the period of October 1993 to February 1994, the attitude and motivation of the sixth grade students will improve and achievement will be increased as measured by a student attitude survey and a performance-based test.

In order to address the problem of motivating the students, an integrated unit of study based on the students' study of Ancient Egypt in social studies during the period from October 1993 to February 1994 was planned. The unit combined activities in social studies, music, art, and literature. The unit included lessons which stressed cooperative learning, direct instruction, and critical and creative thinking activities.

During the last two weeks of September the music teacher/researcher met with the sixth grade social studies and art teachers to share ideas about the integrated unit. The social studies teacher and the art teacher were both very interested in and enthused about trying an integrated unit of instruction. The music teacher and the social studies teacher shared and discussed some resources and books that were available for the instruction of the unit. The principal was informed of the plan to implement the integrated unit.

Rather than beginning the music section of the activities with learning the "King Tut" song as originally planned, the music teacher began with a discussion of how music and dancing were used in the recreational and religious lives of the ancient Egyptians. A packet of material taken from the following sources was used as a basis of discussion: The Guide to Ancient Egypt by Murname, The Egyptians by P. Odijk, Egypt, Gift of the Nile by A. Diamond, and Ancient Egypt by G. Hart. The students were particularly interested in looking at the pictures of the Egyptian instruments. Some comments included "cool" and "awesome."

The students learned that the main instruments used by the Egyptians were pipes, harps, cymbals, drums, and rattles. The students were told that they would be making examples of some of these instruments in cooperative groups.

The groups ranged from two to five people. Although the teacher encouraged everyone to work in a group, four students preferred to work alone and this was allowed. After the groups were chosen, the students talked together to select an instrument to make and materials they might use to construct the instruments. After writing down some of their ideas for materials, they were allowed to consult books on making simple instruments which the music teacher had obtained form the public library.

The majority of the students seemed to enjoy making the instruments. Many students brought materials from home. With the exception of two students from the three sixth grade classes, all the students showed on-task, cooperative behavior during the construction of the instruments. Four students came into the music room during the lunch hour recess to paint their instruments. Several students decorated their instruments with hieroglyphic symbols which they had learned in social studies class.

One problem this teacher/researcher found in doing the instrument project was the time constraint of the thirty-minute music classes. The students many times felt rushed to complete their work in this amount of time. It would be ideal to have a forty-five minute period when doing cooperative group activities involving many materials. Four thirty-minute periods were used to complete the study and construction of the Egyptian instruments.

The next project in the music class was to learn to sing the song "King Tut" by Steve Martin. Although this song is by no means an example of outstanding musical literature, in this teacher's opinion, it proved to be an enjoyable and relevant activity for the students. Many of the boys, especially, liked this song and sang with enthusiasm. The rap-style sections motivated the students because rap is still a part of current popular music. The students were taught to play a short portion of the song on bells and xylophones. They enjoyed the hands-on activity of playing the instrumental pattern in the song. One student brought a book from home entitled Tut's Mummy Lost and Found by Judy Donnelly, published by Random House, 1988, New York. He read portions of the book to the class, and the students discussed what they knew about King Tutankhamen.

The next activity in the music class involved a writing activity. The students discussed how the ancient Egyptians worshipped a number of gods and how they often wrote poetry to praise the sun god. To show a bridge between ancient times and this century, the students learned the Beatles' song "Here Comes the Sun." At first, some of the students rejected this song because they think of the Beatles music as "oldies" songs, but most of them showed more enthusiasm after practicing it for awhile. The classes then used an attribute web to show ideas about how sunshine makes them feel and what kind of things they like to do on a sunny day.

They were then assigned to write words to a song expressing how sunshine makes them feel and/or something they like to do on a sunny day. Most students worked in groups, although some worked individually. The students could write new words to a familiar melody if they chose. The majority of the students showed good effort in doing the assignment, but it seemed to be difficult for many of the students. Since some of the students had difficulty in doing the assignment, they were instructed that writing a poem or short paragraph on the topic would also be acceptable.

The next activity proved to be a favorite of the students. The students studied about how the Egyptian people of the 1950's listened to nightly radio broadcasts of the stories from "A Thousand and One Nights" from the Arabian Nights. The students were told how the beautiful woman, Scheherazade, told tales to entertain King Shahriyar for 1001 nights. They then learned songs from today's Disney version of the movie "Aladdin." Because this movie is very popular with the students and the music is so well written and appealing, the students loved the songs. Every student participated with good effort in this activity.

In art class two of the three sixth grade classes made clay busts of Egyptian figures. The third section made a life-size mummy of papier-mâché. The students liked these activities very much as indicated by a survey (see figure 2). The art teacher reported that the students were more

motivated to do the work because it related to their social studies class. Some of the fifth grade students asked if they would get to do that project when they were in sixth grade.

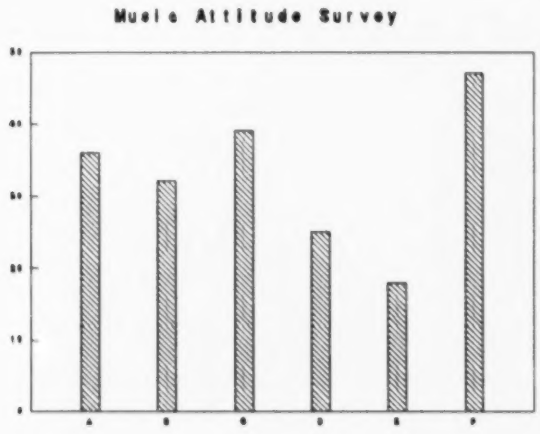
Presentation and Analysis of Project Results

Each student received an effort grade and achievement grade on the four activities of the integrated unit: making the instruments; learning to sing the King Tut song and adding instruments to it; writing the sun songs; and singing the "Aladdin" songs. Effort grades were given by teacher observation of the students' work in class. Achievement grades for making the instruments were based on originality and creativity. Achievement grades on writing the songs were given on originality and content. Achievement grades for learning the songs and adding the instruments were based on teacher observation of students' performance in class. The final grades in achievement for the activities in the integrated unit showed 28 "A's," 19 "B's," and one "C."

In order to assess the effects of the planned intervention, the effort grades the sixth grade students received in music class during the course of the integrated unit were analyzed. Sixty-three percent of the students received an "excellent" grade in effort, 35 percent received a grade of "good," and two percent received a grade indicating "need for improvement." These results show an increase in the number of students receiving "excellent" or

"good" grades as compared to the grades the students received at the end of fifth grade. At that time, 44 percent of the students showed "excellent" effort, 38 percent showed "good" effort, and 18 percent received a grade indicating "need for improvement." Only grades of the sixth grade students who were also in fifth grade at the school last year were compared. The teacher/researcher believes that because of the high achievement of the students, their self-esteem was increased.

To further analyze the results of the integrated unit, an attitude survey (see appendix C) was given to the sixth grade students to determine their feelings about the activities implemented during this unit. The following figure shows the results of this survey:



51 Total Responses
Figure 2

A. # of students who felt the variety of activities made music class more interesting

B. # of students who enjoyed making the instruments

C. # of students who liked singing the "Aladdin" songs

D. # of students who felt they gained a better understanding of how art and music related to other subjects

E. # of students who felt the integrated unit made the study of Egypt in social studies more interesting

F. # of students who enjoyed making the figures in art class

The survey shows that 65 percent of the students did feel that doing a variety of activities in the music class made the class more interesting. Forty-nine percent of the students felt they gained a better understanding of how art and music relate to other subjects. Thirty-five percent felt that doing the art and music activities along with the study of Egypt made their study of Egypt in social studies more interesting.

Reflections and Conclusions

The teacher/researcher was pleased with the results of many aspects of the solution strategy. The majority of the students felt that the variety of activities employed in the music class made the class more interesting. Many students did show increased effort in the sixth grade music class as compared to their fifth grade work. The majority of the students did enjoy the "hands-on" activities of making the instruments in music class and in doing the projects in art class.

Although this teacher/researcher had hoped for a greater number, 49 percent of the students felt that they gained a better understanding of how art and music relate to other subjects. Perhaps if more time had been spent on actual discussion of ways in which the subjects relate, more students would have been able to see the relationships. This is something to consider for future study.

The biggest disappointment of the integrated unit was that only 35 percent of the students felt that doing the integrated unit made the study of Egypt more interesting in social studies. Unfortunately, many of today's students don't seem very interested in ancient history.

For a course outline of the integrated unit implemented see Appendix D.

Chapter 6

DECISIONS OF THE FUTURE

The Solution Strategy

Having concluded the unit integrating music, literature, and art activities with the social studies unit on Ancient Egypt, there are several portions of the music section that I would like to continue to use with the sixth grade. The section on instruments in which we studied the Egyptian instruments and then tried making some simple instruments was a different kind of activity than we sometimes do in music class, and one that most of the students enjoyed. Singing the song "King Tut" and adding the instruments was also something that I would retain in the future. The "Aladdin" songs were also a favorite of the students, and I plan to continue using these songs in the future.

The Beatles' song "Here Comes the Sun" that I used as an introduction to writing the sun songs proved to be a song that the students did not at first enjoy. If I can find a current popular song dealing with that subject in the future, I may consider changing that portion of the study.

In general, I felt the unit was very worthwhile. Some of the students did gain a better understanding of how the

various subjects are related. Most of them did like the variety of activities used. Working in groups is also something worth using in the future.

I think by doing a variety of activities which involved using the various intelligences noted by Howard Gardner and discussed in Chapter 1, the self-esteem of the students was raised. Some students who are not always successful in singing were very successful in the activities requiring visual/spatial and verbal/linguistic skills. I, as teacher of many students, got to know these sixth graders better as individuals because during the course of the cooperative lessons, I was able to walk around and talk to the students as they were working. I also got to know some of the students better because they participated in a chorus that met during the lunch hour recess twice a week. We have some parties during the course of the year.

The most difficult matter regarding doing the integrated unit was the limited amount of time that I see the students for music class. Seeing the students twice a week, and sometimes less often due to holidays and institutes, does not always allow for lengthy units of study. My district also has a music curriculum with specific goals for students to accomplish at each grade level. Criterion references tests are given at third and sixth grade levels. In addition, each grade level must participate in a musical every year. Perhaps in the future,

our curriculum may be changed somewhat to allow more time for integrated study. My district is currently developing goals which include plans for integrated study.

Additional Applications

Besides the integrated unit planned as a solution strategy for this action research project, I also did some integrated activities in other grade levels. One very successful series of lessons involved teaching dinosaur songs to the fourth graders. These students have a dinosaur unit in their literature book and do a research project related to this study. The songs that I used from the album, "Once Upon a Dinosaur" by Jane Murphy have been carefully researched by the composer and give the students additional information about the various kinds of dinosaurs.

I also worked with one of the fifth grade teachers to supply information and resources about black musicians during the course of her teaching about famous black Americans. The students learned a song about Martin Luther King in music class.

In second grade music class I taught the students some songs dealing with friendship that correlate with their language arts unit on friendship. We also sang many holiday and seasonal songs.

In the future I would like to continue with integration of music and other subjects. I feel this is a strong motivational tool to use because the students can see how

music relates to their total curriculum. I would like to plan more units to correlate with the language arts units of the various grade levels.

Social studies is another area that I wish to explore more fully, particularly in the fifth grade study of American history and the sixth grade study of world history. I hope to work more closely with the physical education teacher to plan folk dances and other activities related to the study of various cultures.

Dissemination of Data and Recommendations

At the monthly meetings of my district's music staff, we often have an opportunity to share and discuss ideas. At one of these meetings I hope to give a presentation to tell about the unit of study I implemented for this action research project. I have already given some copies of my research materials to two other music teachers in my district who are interested in using some of these materials.

Our district is also developing district learning teams who meet and prepare integrated units of study during the summer and during the school year. I hope to act as a music consultant to some of these teams. Having taught for many years, I have a wide resource of materials and ideas that could be incorporated into these units. The units developed by these teams will be shared throughout the district.

Another possible avenue of disseminating information is to write articles for the Music Educators Journal and the Illinois Music Educators Journal. The latter journal has a section which publishes ideas submitted by teachers.

In conclusion, I feel that by doing the action research project and learning about many new strategies to use in my teaching, I have added a great wealth of knowledge to my teaching repertoire. I am looking forward to further refining these strategies and using them in my teaching.

References Cited

Bellanca, J. & Fogarty, R. (1991). Patterns for thinking, patterns for transfer. Palatine, Illinois: Skylight Publishing, Inc.

Bibbins, N. (1993). More than music, a collaborative curriculum. Music Educators Journal, 80, 23-28.

Burnaford, G. (1993). The challenge of the integrated curricula. Music Educators Journal, 79, 44-47.

Carlta, M. (1991). We don't carry a tune very far these days. New York Times Service, 10-11.

Diamond, A. (1992). Egypt gift of the Nile. New York: Dillon Press.

Eisner, E. (1992). The misunderstood role of the arts in human development. Phi Delta Kappan, 73, 591-596.

Fogarty, R. (1992). The integrated curriculum. Instructor, 102, 34-35.

Fowler, C. (1990). Recognizing the role of artistic intelligences. Music Educators Journal, 77, 24-27.

Gardner, H. (1993). Frames of mind. New York: Basic Books.

George, P. & Lawrence, G. (1982). Handbook for middle school teaching. Illinois: Scott, Foresman and Company.

Glenn, K. (1992). The forgotten arts. Illinois Music Educators Journal, 53, 30.

Hart, G. (1990). Ancient Egypt. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Hoff, H. (1984). Honey will get you farther than vinegar. Music Educators Journal, 71, 24-28.

Hunter, M. (1967). Motivation. California: Tip Publications.

Murnane, W. (1983). The guide to ancient Egypt. New York: Facts on File, Inc.

Odijk, P. (1989). The Egyptians. New Jersey: Silver Burdette Press.

Pateman, R. (1993). Egypt. Singapore: Time Editions Pte., Ltd.

Powell, L. (1984). Pieces to the motivation puzzle. Music Educators Journal. 71, 31-33.

The School District 21 Report Card, November, 1992.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

MUSIC INTEREST SURVEY

1. I participate in the activities of the music class.

   Seldom Sometimes Most of the time

2. I enjoy music class.

   Seldom Sometimes Most of the time

3. I listen attentively to music in class.

   Seldom Sometimes Most of the time

4. I listen well in class discussion.

   Seldom Sometimes Most of the time

5. I participate in music activities outside of class.

   Yes No

6. Members of my family sing songs or play instruments at home.

   Yes No

7. My family attends musical concerts or shows.

   Seldom Sometimes Most of the time

Appendix B

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What activities in last year's music class did you like best?

2. What activities in last year's class did you not enjoy?

3. Do you feel that music is an important subject?

4. Do you feel that you always do your best in music class?

5. Do your parents feel that music class is important?

6. How do you think a knowledge of music can help you in your adult life?

7. Are you interested in any career in which music would be used? If so, what?

8. What music do you listen to at home?

9. Do you prefer to do small group or whole class activities in music class?

10. How can you use music to make your life more enjoyable now and in the future?

11. Do you think you sing well?

Appendix C

MUSIC ATTITUDE SURVEY

1. Do you feel that doing the Egyptian art and music activities along with your study of Egypt in social studies made the study of Egypt more interesting?

   Yes No

2. Did you like making instruments in music class?

   Yes No

3. Did you like working in groups to make the instruments?

   Yes No

4. Did you like singing the song "King Tut?"

   Yes No

5. Did you like playing the xylophone and bell parts on the "King Tut" song?

   Yes No

6. Did you like trying to write your own songs about the sun?

   Yes No

7. Did you like learning the Aladdin songs?

   Yes No

8. Do you think doing many different kinds of activities such as making instruments and playing instruments made music class more interesting?

   Yes No

9. Did you like making the Egyptian figures in art class?

   Yes No

10. Do you feel that you gained a better understanding of how music and art relate to other subjects such as social studies and writing?

    Yes No

Appendix D

COURSE OUTLINE OF INTEGRATED UNIT

Lesson One

Discussion of use of music in recreational and religious lives of the ancient Egyptians.
Kinds of instruments used.

Lesson Two

Discussion of ways to make simple Egyptian instruments.
Brainstorm ideas of materials to use to make simple instruments.

Lesson Three

Work on making instruments in cooperative groups.

Lesson Four

Completion of making instruments.
Show instruments in class.

Lesson Five

Sing the song "King Tut."
Discuss what the students know about King Tutankhamen.

Lesson Six

Review the song "King Tut."
Add bell and xylophone parts.

Lesson Seven

Discussion of Egyptian worship of many gods.
Discussion of how Egyptians wrote poetry and hymns to praise the sun god.
Sing the song "Here Comes the Sun."

Lesson Eight

Practice singing "King Tut" and "Here Comes the Sun."

Lesson Nine

Practice "Here Comes the Sun."
Web ideas as a class about how sunshine makes you feel.

Lesson Ten

Write songs about the sun in cooperative groups.

Lessons Eleven and Twelve

Continue working on sun songs.
Perform for class members.

Lessons Thirteen through Sixteen

Discussion of how Egyptians in the 1950's listened to stories from The Arabian Nights on the radio.
Teach and practice the "Aladdin" songs.